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ABSTRACT

There are many recent examples of innovative schools that were launched with high hopes but have run into difficulties, succumbed to the status quo, or failed to survive. The creation of new schools can be viewed as "social architecture" involving the design and building of educational social systems. The three-year project on Social Architecture in Education is documenting the planning, staffing, start-up, and implementing of five new innovative schools. This paper is one of five presented at a symposium consisting of papers drawn from first-year cross-site data analyses focusing several disciplines on core issues that arise when new educational social systems are created. The question examined is, How do alternative views of educational goals relate to planning and starting new schools? Data from planners, administrators, and faculty help in examining agreement or disagreement on goals and the traditional phenomena of goal succession and goal displacement that occur as new schools move from planning through implementation. (Author/MLF)

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GOALS FOR NEW SCHOOLS:

AGREEMENT, SUCCESSION AND DISPLACEMENT*

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When educational planners set out to design new schools, they are given a unique opportunity to be creative and to envisage something better than schools that already exist. Given this opportunity, what sorts of goals are set for new schools? Are they very different from the goals of already existing schools? Are they subject to the same forces that goals encounter in other organizations, and are there special problems that are encountered by new schools that try to be innovative? These are some of the questions we have tried to keep in mind as we have studied the planning and beginnings of five schools in the northeastern United States during the past year.

In this paper we will relate what we have been doing so far and what we have been finding out in our study to some of the findings of previous research about educational goals, organizational goals, and innovating organizations.

Educational Goals

Educational goals have been studied from a number of different perspectives, and there is a substantial literature on this topic. For the limited purposes of this paper we will only touch lightly on a few basic themes and findings. There are, of course, educational goals held and expressed at many levels in our society. National, state and local organizations frequently set or endorse goals for education as an institution, but our study is concerned with the creation of individual schools as organizations and with the goals associated with each school.

One might anticipate that a concern with individual schools would produce data with such a high level of specificity that they would be difficult to use as the

basis for generalizations, but this is hardly the case. There is ample evidence that even as they relate to individual schools, educational goals tend to be rather diffusely stated and to cover the same general areas of concern from elementary schools through colleges. Especially pervasive are four general types of student output goals; (1) intellectual, (2) social, (3) personal and (4) practical. These in turn emphasize students' learning subject matter and social roles, and developing their individuality, and matching students to appropriate programs and careers. The first three types are sometimes referred to as socialization-training goals, and the last type as selection-allocation goals (Sieber & Wilder 1973). These four types of goals have emerged from such diverse sources as factor analysis of the responses of samples of adults, parents, teachers, and students and from academic deans of colleges and universities (Downey 1960, Wilder et al. 1968, Sieber 1973). The emphasis is on roughly similar student outputs at all levels.

When organizational participants are polled, some additional goals tend to emerge. First and foremost are what have been called organizational maintenance goals (Sieber & Wilder 1973); these stress factors that would help the school as an organization continue into an uncertain future. Secondly there are a host of personal goals that individual educators hold, particularly those that relate to their professional careers and work situations. Thus while most participants in the system support a small number of diffusely stated student output goals, professional educators express their vested interest in the continuence of the organizations with which they are affiliated and in their individual goals as educators.

More detailed analysis in studies of educational goals have indicated that most individuals and schools support all student output goals as long as they are stated in rather general terms, but that some goals are emphasized more than others by certain types of people and by schools serving different populations (Wilder, 1968).

Generally, it appears that the more heterogeneous the population served, the more diffusely the goals must be stated in order to accomodate diversity of interest without seeming to play any favorites. The so-called comprehensive high school probably illustrates this problem better than any other school in our society. Individuals associated with a comprehensive school may set highly specified goals and priorities, but the school as a whole cannot. There is a considerable potential for conflict, but this seems to be recognized and mitigated by most participants as they express support for multiple goals, including goals in which they have no direct personal interest. In addition the school must respond to the larger society where, for example, emphasis may be on excellence during one decade and on equality of opportunity during another. Too strong a commitment to any one set of goals at the expense of another is bound to bring repercussions, and school administrators are all too familiar with the politics of this problem.

Organizational Goals

As others have pointed out (Corwin 1965, Bidwell 1967), schools share a number of goal-related problems with other organizations. For example, Corwin stresses the fact that as goals become too diffusely stated, they become mere platitudes and fail to receive sufficient attention. This leads him to make a distinction between such non-operational goals and the internal commitments of the organization. Moreover he hypothesizes that

> the commitments of a school are the result of the bargaining process among the power blocks of the school and between those power blocks and certain outsiders who are able to exercize constraint. The implication is that the operating goals of a school are identical to the bargains made between groups in conflict (Corwin, 1965 p. 434-435).

Thus as we study the goals of schools, we encounter the familiar organizational problems of goals succession and goal displacement (Merton 1957). Diffusely stated student output goals must compete for priority and limited resources, and they tend to become displaced by the more specific goals of participants.

Another distinction in terminology that has become increasingly common in the literature is made between objectives and goals (Trivett 1973). Goal succession is conscious and desirable when it refers to the attainment of specific objectives set by a school, but goal displacement usually refers to making terminal goals out of instrumental goals; and this in many cases could translate into goals and objectives respectively. There is also a tendency to treat goal displacement as undesirable, for example, when getting good grades becomes more important than learning subject matter. But sometimes goals are unrealistic or outmoded by a changing system, and treating their displacement as undesirable is obviously an over-simplification of a very complex problem.

Innovating Organizations

The third research tradition against which our concern with educational goals can be viewed is the study of innovation in educational organizations. In this study we deliberately set out to study the planning and starting of new schools that were innovative. There were many reasons for this, including the long standing interest most of us had in this area of research. We also believed that we would not learn as much from what we have come to call the "cookie cutter" version of planning and start up wherein a conscious attempt is made to be as much like other schools as possible. Ironically, this has given us some problems. Our impression is that new and innovative schools may be harder to find now in contrast with a few years ago because of the economic recession and the conservatism that seem to be affecting our schools now.

It should be noted that most of the literature on educational innovation refers to innovative programs rather than innovative new schools. Some interesting exceptions can be found in the literature about alternative schools (Center for New Schools 1972, Gross Giacquinta & Bernstein 1971, and Smith and Keith 1971) but most studies focus on special programs (Miles 1964, Berman & McLaughlin 1975, Zaltman, Duncan & Holbeck 1973).

This is a crucial difference since innovative programs are usually imbedded in schools that are aleady operating successfully. The innovation frequently provides a new option within a more traditional structure, and if it doesn't succeed, it can frequently be done without, and the school will continue on its usual course relatively unscathed. Committing an entire new school to an innovation may represent a relatively rare high risk venture. The educational system is, as many have noted, relatively stable in our society, and there are many forces within it that tend to produce uniformity. To the extent that participants in the system have been successfully socialized, they have become carriers of stable expectations and are conservative forces in themselves. According to this view, innovations are highly vulnerable creations in an environment that resists change. Many writers have noted this conservative tendency and it has been attributed to a number of different sources. Two polar but not irreconciliable views are put forth by Wayland who stresses structural constraints imposed by the need to integrate and coordinate a national educational system (Wayland 1964) and Argyris who maintains that all individuals in the system are programed to behave in ways that make them incapable of successfully sustaining significant innovations (Argyris 1975). There are also powerful forces in the system that support change and innovation, not the least of which are professional educators themselves; but as Corwin has recently pointed out in his analysis of Teacher Corps schools, there is a great deal of interaction among variables supporting and resisting innovations in schools (Corwin 1975). However, there is also abundant literature demonstrating the low survival rates of innovative programs in schools, and this suggests that innovative schools could be especially vulnerable (Berman & McLaughlin 1975).

To summarize, studies of educational goals revealed a number of uniformities in the system that could provide the basis for comparison with the innovative schools in our sample. Organizational studies suggested that planning and implementation of new schools would provide a rich harvest of goal successions and displacements, and

studies of educational innovations suggested that there would be a tendency for innovative schools to become less innovative as they progressed from early planning through implementation and became operating organizations.

Data Collection and Findings

Early in 1975 we constructed a goals instrument based on past studies and on data already gathered from the field in this study. We were somewhat torn from the beginning between wanting to have uniformity of items across sites in order to make comparisons, and also wanting to capture the unique features of each site.

As a result, the early forms of instruments share far more items than the more recent versions that have become more tailor-made for individual schools. Our intent was to collect responses to self administered questionnaires from representative members of each school at different points in time. This was designed for three types of comparisons: status comparisons and time comparisons within schools, and between school comparisons. Analysis at the individual level is also possible but is not being conducted because the grouped data are most relevant for our purposes. The preliminary data to date come mostly from the two sites that opened last fall, but some impressions have been formed about two of the sites still in the planning stages. The first of these, Campus High, is a collaboration between a municipal college and a local district. The planning group consists of a group of experts who have been meeting for some time now under conditions of high frustration and uncertainity about the future existence of the school they are supposed to be planning. Little progress has been made, and they appear in some respects to be a remarkably pure case of goal displacement. That is, the continued existence of the planning group itself seems to be the major outcome of their recent meetings. Nevertheless, they have filled out our goals instrument and are unanimous in selecting two goals out of 36 as among the five they would assign highest priority for the school. These are "To teach students the basic skills," and "To provide a good learning environment for low motivated kids with poor basic skills." No other school in our sample placed such high emphasis

on these particular goals.

A second as yet unopened school, Interarts, is a collaborative effort of a number of school districts and will provide an arts program on a half day basis to a small number of students from each district. Among this planning group the highest support and almost unanimous consensus have been reached on four goals quite different from those emphasized by Campus High planners. These are "To improve learning opportunities for gifted and talented students," "To provide a variety of learning environments and activities," "To provide personalized and individualized programming and instruction," and "To be a place where students like to be." The planners of Interarts have become increasingly agreed as to which goals will receive the most emphasis in the school as their planning has progressed.

Three generalizations are suggested by these data from the two unopened schools. (1) Given a relatively similar list of goals from which to choose, planning groups for innovative schools with different programs will select quite different goals as worthy of highest priority. (2) A high consensus will be reached among the planners on perceived high priority or "meta" goals. (3) Traditional goals will continue to be assigned relatively high priority even by planners of innovative schools.

One of the interesting things about the five perceived meta goals chosen by the planners of these two schools is the fact that only one of them is explicitly a student output goal (To teach students the basic skills.) The other four stress educational process or throughput. Thus in a sense planners of innovative schools will displace traditional student output goals right from the beginning by placing major emphasis on educational environment and process.

If we can accept the widespread point of view that educational innovations must overcome the resistence of a conservative educational environment, innovative goals will become especially vulnerable each time new members enter the system. Planning groups may reach a high level of consensus, but new members who enter the

system must either be socialized, coopted, or otherwise persuaded of the legitimacy of the goals that the planners agree are most important. Where planners are also implementers, ownership of important goals may help maintain them. But even where there is a one to one correspondence between planners and implementers, other forces may prevent goal attainment and even deny the legitimacy of important innovative goals. Data from the two sites already opened indicate that goal consensus may reach its highest peak for innovative schools during the planning stage.

At Goodstock, an urban high school for careers in business, goal consensus among planners was a foregone conclusion since the school was essentially planned by one person, a woman who was also a leading candidate for the principalship. She too emphasized a number of process goals, especially those that would symbolize and support more egalitarian student-teacher relationships. When she failed to win the job, most of these goals were effectively abandoned by her successor. Nevertheless, teachers and parents associated with Goodstock indicated a set of goal preferences that differentiates their school from others.

Table I contains a summary of goal priorities expressed by the teachers of Goodstock during July and December, 1975, their perceptions of the extent to which the school was on its way toward achieving each goal during December, and the orientations of a sample of parents of Goodstock students toward these same goals. It should be noted that the goals contained in this table represent survivors from a much longer list, and this explains in part the fact that most of these goals are deemed so important by the teachers. The first column indicates the perceived meta goals held by the teachers in the summer before school opened (the proportion choosing the goal as one of the five goals they expected to be given the highest priority once the school was opened). There were two goals which fifty percent or more of the teachers agreed would receive high priority and three more selected by at least thirty percent. Again these five goals refer mostly to process rather than student output. Four goals, numbers 4 through 7, show up for the first time on this

questionnaire as an outgrowth of earlier open-ended responses and interviews by fieldworkers. Numbers 4 and 5 are especially interesting because they refer to student inputs which have been a problem for the school. The first of these, the desire for an ethnically integrated student body, is supported by majorities of both teachers and parents through not yet achieved by the school. The second, a desire for roughly equal proportions of boys and girls, is supported by a majority of the parents, but interestingly not by a majority of teachers. (Needless to say, the majority of students are girls.) This concern with student inputs may be confined to areas where uncertainties exist regarding the makeup of the student populations to be served by particular schools. The fact that this concern persists reflects failure of the school to attain these instrumental goals when the school was opened. Teachers do acknowledge that their school is achieving some goals better than others, but both teachers and parents tend to agree that most reasonable sounding goals are important. In short, the goals given most emphasis could be applied to almost any business oriented high school.

Without doubt the most dramatic evidence that we have collected about the vulnerability of innovative goals in an operating school was provided by teachers and parents at Lincoln Heights, a suburban elementary school that serves an upper middle-class population. Lincoln Heights was planned as an open space school but was slightly modified as a result of pressure from parents as the school opened. Eventually, as this pressure increased, self-contained classrooms replaced the open plan.

Table II contains the responsesof teachers and parents at Lincoln Heights to our goals questions. The most surprising finding in this table is that although the most salient aspect about Lincoln Hts. school was without question the unusual open plan, none of the three items in the goals instrument designed to tap this innovative feature was perceived by significant numbers of teachers as one of the five goals expected to receive the most attention once the school opened. Instead, one traditional student output goal and four process goals were chosen most

frequently. (These were placed quite differently in the July questionnaire from the way they appear in Table II.) Controversy over the open plan had already erupted before the instrument was administered, and it is not clear whether there would have been more frequent perception of these as meta goals at some earlier date.

By the time the questionnaire was administered for the second time in December 1975, there were only four items asked at both Goodstock and Lincoln Heights. Questions 1 and 2 are identical. Support for these two goals was high at both schools, but Linclon Heights respondents perceived somewhat more progress toward achieving them than Goodstock respondents. Question 4 at Lincoln Heights is the same as question 14 at Goodstock, and results were quite similar at both. However, item 7, "To experiment with new educational programs and structures," gave sharply contrasting results at the two sites. At Goodstock this goal was supported by virtually all teachers and parents, but at Lincoln Heights support among teachers was down to 69% in the summer of 1975 and fell to 38% in December. When walls for self-contained classrooms were added to the school, we started using the term goal abandonment to describe what had happened, but the survey results do not entirely support this. Substantial proportions of teachers and parents still support this goal despite the discontinuence of the open space plan of the school, and this has been the source of considerable discontent.

It appears that respondents at the two sites were responding to this item at quite different levels. At Goodstock, where there isn't actually much visible experimentation with new educational programs happening, it still has a good sound. But at Lincoln Heights, it means open space. Two other items dealing with innovation, numbers 6 and 8, also show considerable erosion over time among the teachers. Two-thirds of the teachers continued to support the goal "To try out innovative uses of space in the educational programs" and half the parents concurred; but less than forty percent of the teachers and parents agreed that "To be different from

traditional schools" is a valid and worthwhile goal for the school.

The power struggle between parents and teachers at Lincoln Heights over the open plan has affected responses to additional items as well. For example, 91% of the teachers agreed that teachers should be given a substantial role in setting policy compared with 43% of the parents; but 66% of the parents agreed that "To give the community the kind of education it wants" was a valid and important goal compared with just 24% of the teachers. Substantial majorities of parents and teachers agreed that "To develop good relations with the community" was a valid and important goal, but very few teachers perceived the school as progressing toward achieving this or progressing toward the goals of teachers setting policy or giving the community the kind of education it wants. Parents also expressed considerably less support than teachers for providing"opportunities for teachers' professional growth." It should also be noted that the only goal receiving stronger support from teachers at the second administration of the instrument than the first was "To provide a systematic process for assessing the effectiveness of the educational program."

Despite the striking differences in the patterns of responses to these questions about goals at the two schools, one should not conclude that goals are differently arrived at or that they assume greater importance generally in one school rather than another. Teachers were asked a series of questions about how goals are identified and formed and the level of commitment of staff at both Goodstock and Lincoln Hts. The results are presented in Table III. Perhaps the most striking aspect of the responses is their general similarity at the two schools. This despite the turmoil with the community at Lincoln Hts.and the relative peace at Goodstock. There is less agreement at Lincoln Hts.that goals do not matter, that faculty feel very little responsibility for goals, that goals are set by a minority and passed on to the rest of the faculty and that goals are overtly accepted but covertly resisted strongly. If one were to see just these responses without knowing more about the two schools, one might get the impression that goals are more of a problem at

Goodstock than at Lincoln Hts. So much for survey data taken out of context!

This leads us to make another methodological comment. It is virtually impossible to collect enough data and to collect data often enough in a study such as ours, or to analyse all you collect. It is tempting to speculate that most of the teachers at Lincoln Hgts. would have perceived the innovative goals as meta goals had we collected data earlier than late July when difficulties had already begun. However, we will never know whether this is true. Morover,it is possible that many goals experience peaks and troughs of support that fall between our collection intervals. Regular field work does protect us considerably, but we cannot enter our field notes as percentages in the same tables with the survey materials.

We have known for some time that complete agreement on educational goals between and among educators and parents is not possible and probably not desirable (Wilder et al. 1968, Foskett 1966, Gross, Mason & McFachern 1957). We have also known that integration of personal goals and organizational goals may often not be possible or desirable (Simon 1960, Etzioni 1964, Barrett 1970), but we know very little beyond this. Our preliminary data have suggested some additional hypotheses to be thrown into this arena.

Agreement on innovative school goals seems to become especially critical and problematic when goals reach high levels of specificity and visibility. As long as the goals are diffusely stated expressions of human values and of the desire for progress, high levels of support will be forthcoming. In fact, such goals offer marvelous opportunities for schools and communities to express their solidarity. But even high levels of specificity can be tolerated with programs set within larger pluralistic organizations. Innovative schools, on the other hand, are faced with an especially difficult set of problems. If they place emphasis on innovation, they must still make a convincing case that they are stressing traditional goals or they will trigger a conservative reaction and the accusation that they are ignoring fundamentals.

Level of specificity is something of a double bind. As Gross et al (1971) pointed out, innovative goals are easier for new schools to attain when clearly stated. Highly specified goals may even create the impression that educators are well organized and know what they are about. But highly specified goals may also (1) make innovations too visible, concrete and rigid, (2) expose the school to criticism that could be avoided, (3) make failure to attain goals and the lack of appropriate skills and knowledge obvious and (4) prevent truly imaginative and creative innovations from receiving adequate trials. Diffuse goals, however, will suffer the familiar problems of becoming platitudes that are displaced by others that are more specific. It appears then that the goals of innovative schools not only face problems shared by goals in others schools, but that they are especially vulnerable. Highly specified goals are vulnerable to being abandoned altogether, but the more diffuse goals that survive are vulnerable to being given lip service but otherwise ignored. One thing is clear, regardless of how innovative school goals are formulated, their success and survival can never be taken for granted.

TABLE I

Proportions of teachers at Goodstock High School indicating selected goals as (1) among the five most likely to be given priority when the school opens (2) personally favored in July 1975 (3) considered important, valid and worthwhile December 1975 (4) being achieved or on the way toward being achieved, December 1975; and (5) proportions of parents agreeing each goal is valid, important and worthwhile early 1976.

TEACHING

	(1) Perceived Meta Goals July	(2) Favored July 1975	(3) Important Nov.1975	(4) i.e. Acheiving Nov.1975	(5) Paren 1976
1. To be a place where students would like to be.	57%	100%	100%	48%	96
2. To teach students the basic skills.	37%	100%	92	50	96
3. To provide students contact with the reality of the world about them.	50%	100%	100	79	92
4. To have an ethnically integrated student body.		not asked	88	25	74
5. To have close to a 50-50 balance of boys and girls in the student body.		not asked	48	17	78
6. To give equal curricular emphasis to academic and business subjects.		not asked	88	67	94
7. To involve the students in work-experience activities with local businesses.		not asked	96	71	94
8. To establish new relationships within the school.		not asked	84	50	90
9. To aid the personal development of students into mature, healthy and stable adults.		92%	100	54	100
10. To provide a curriculum which reflects the latest knowledge in science and other disciplines.		100%	100	50	96
11. To maintain high standards and academic excellence.	33%	97%	100	50	98
12. To provide vocational education that is just as important as college preparation.	30%	97%	92	58	94
13. To experiment with new educational programs and structures.		97%	100	54	94
14. To provide a variety of learning environments and activities.		100%	100	71	96
	N=(30)	(30)	(24)	(24)	(56)

TABLE II

Proportions of teachers at Lincoln Heights Elementary School indicating selected goals as (1) Among the five most likely to be given priority when the school opened (2) Personally favored in July 1975 (3) Considered important, valid, and worthwhile November 1975 (4) and being achieved or on the way to being achieved November 1975; and proportions of parent agreeing each goal is valid, important or worthwhile March 1976.

	(1) Perceived Meta Goals July	(2) Favored July 1975	(3) Important Nov.1975	(4) Achieving Nov.1975	(5) Parents 1976
1. To be a place where students would like to be.	71%	100%	83	62	84
2. To teach students the basic skills.	41%	100	95	67	87
3. To foster an atmosphere of trust between adults and children.	65%	100	86	71	77
4. To provide a variety of learning environments and activities.	41%	100	90	67	88
5. To provide personalized and individualized programming and instruction.	41%	100	81	67	79
6. To try out innovative uses of space in the educational program.	(12%)	88	67	48	52
7. To experiment with new educational programs and structures.	(6%)	69	38	24	42
8. To be different from traditional schools.	(0%)	50	38	38	34
9. To give teachers a substantial role in setting policy.		94	91	13	43
10. To develop good relations with the community.		100	86	10	70
11. To increase the independece and autonomy of students.		100	90	67	70
12. To provide a systematic process for assessing the effectiveness of the educational program.		75	86	50	76
13. To increase "sharing" of teacher abilities, talents and skills.		not asked	86	35	73
14. To give the community the kind of education it wants.		31	24	19	66
15. To have opportunities for teachers' professional growth.		not asked	75	38	56
N=	(17)	(17)	(21)	(21)	(115)

TABLE III

Proportions of teachers at Goodstock and Lincoln Heights Schools agreeing, undecided, and disagreeing with statements about how goals are identified and formed and how much commitment there is toward them at their school.

			Disagree	?	Agree
1.	Faculty members have been given sufficient opportunity to discuss and define our school's goals.	Goodstock	31	23	46
		Lincoln Heights	36	28	36
2.	In our school, practically speaking, goals do not matter too much--it's our day to day work that counts.	Goodstock	59	4	38
		Lincoln Hgts.	56	32	12
3.	In our school goals are set by a minority and passed on as orders to the rest of the faculty.	Goodstock	48	16	36
		Lincoln Hgts.	52	28	20
4.	The informal organization of our school strongly support the goals of the formal organization.	Goodstock	11	50	38
		Lincoln Hgts.	20	50	30
5.	Personnel in all roles at out school feel real responsibility for the school's goals and behave in ways to implement them.	Goodstock	22	44	34
		Lincoln Hgts.	24	40	36
6.	In our school goals are overtly accepted but covertly resisted strongly.	Goodstock	38	32	30
		Lincoln Hgts.	36	48	16
7.	In our school mostly only the administration feels responsibility for the goals; the typical faculty person feels very little responsibility	Goodstock	67	11	22
		Lincoln Hgts.	72	24	4

Goodstock N=(27)
Lincoln Hgts N=(25)

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